

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8642
INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 4405

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, OAS, EC
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER RESPONDS TO REPORTER INQUIRY ON
OAS, OTHER SUBJECTS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: FONMIN JOSE AYALA, RESPONDING TO A REPORTER'S QUESTIONS, SAID THAT ECUADOR'S SUPPORT OF ARMS LIMITATION IS A BASIC POLICY POSITION, BUT THAT SUCCESS OF THAT EFFORT DEPENDS ON RESOLUTION OF OUTSTANDING DISPUTES IN THE HEMISPHERE. HE CLAIMED ECUADOR ENJOYS A VERY GOOD HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD AS REFLECTED IN ITS SELECTION TO HEAD THE OAS JURIDICAL-POLITICAL COMMITTEE. AYALA CLAIMED THAT ECUADOR'S PRESENT RETURN TO CIVILIAN, CONSTITUTIONAL RULE, IS LOOKED UPON THROUGHOUT THE HEMISPHERE AS A POSITIVE EXPERIMENT IN A DE FACTO GOVERNMENT GIVING UP POWER VOLUNTARILY. END SUMMARY.

2. FONMIN JOSE AYALA RESPONDED ON JUNE 27 TO A SERIES OF QUESTIONS RAISED BY A CORRESPONDENT FROM THE QUITO DAILY EL COMERCIO. THE QUESTIONS GENERALLY COVERED THE MAJOR TOPICS WHICH HAVE ARISEN TO DATE AT THE OASGA CURRENTLY UNDERWAY. IN GENERAL AYALA MANAGED TO DODGE THE MORE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS WHILE RESPONDING IN A VERY GENERAL WAY TO OTHERS.
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3. QUESTIONED ON HIS EFFORTS AT THE OASGA AND THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS REPORT TO THE CABINET ON HIS RETURN, AYALA SAID THAT THE CRITICAL QUESTION WAS THAT OF RESTRUCTURING THE OAS. HE MENTIONED "LAST MINUTE" DISAGREEMENT ON THE VARIOUS DRAFT DOCUMENTS ON RESTRUCTURING AS A KEY IMPEDIMENT, ALONG WITH THE CONTINUED APPLICATION

OF THE DISCRIMINATORY CLAUSE IN THE US FOREIGN TRADE ACT.

4. THE REPORTER THEN ASKED HOW AYALA SQUARED HIS SUPPORT FOR LATIN AMERICAN DISARMAMENT WITH THE REPORTED SALE BY THE US OF \$220 MILLION OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO ECUADOR. (COMMENT: A WIRE SERVICE REPORT QUOTING DOD AS ANNOUNCING THE SALE OF THE CHAPARRAL TO ECUADOR, WITH A VALUE OF \$220 MILLION, APPEARED IN EL COMERCIO ON JUNE 27.) AYALA RESPONDED THAT SUPPORT FOR ARMS LIMITATION WAS PART OF THE BASIC POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE GOE. HE ADDED THAT THE DISCUSSION OF THE SUBJECT IN WASHINGTON UNDERLINED THAT ONE OF THE BASIC CAUSES OF ARMS RACES IS THE EXISTENCE OF TENSIONS IN THE REGION WHICH ARE CAUSED BY SUBSTANTIVE PROBLEMS. HE SAID THE GOE ARGUED FOR AN EFFORT TO SEEK SOLUTIONS TO THOSE PROBLEMS WHICH WOULD CAUSE BOTH TENSIONS AND THE RESULTING ARMS RACES TO DISAPPEAR.

5. QUESTIONED ON HUMAN RIGHTS, AYALA NOTED THE GOOD REPUTATION ECUADOR HAS IN HUMAN RIGHTS. HE SAID THAT ECUADOR'S FINE RECORD IN THIS REGARD WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GOE'S BEING REQUESTED TO HEAD THE JURIDICAL-POLITICAL COMMITTEE OF THE OAS WHICH HAS UNDER ITS CONTROL THE MANAGEMENT OF OAS HUMAN RIGHTS EFFORTS. THE REPORTER THEN ASKED WHETHER AYALA WAS AWARE OF ANY CLAIMS FROM WITHIN ECUADOR THAT HUMAN RIGHTS WERE BEING VIOLATED IN THE COUNTRY. HE RESPONDED THAT HE WAS UNAWARE

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OF ANY PROBLEMS AT THE PRESENT. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT A LETTER HAD BEEN PRESENTED TO THE OAS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION SEVERAL MONTHS AGO BUT THAT THE GOE HAD GIVEN ADEQUATE EXPLANATION OF THE CASE AND THE COMMISSION WHICH AGREED THAT THE CASE WAS RESOLVED.

6. THE REPORTER THEN ASKED WHAT OPINION THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE HEMISPHERE HAD CONCERNING THE PRESENT POLITICAL PROCESS IN ECUADOR. HE SAID THE RETURN TO CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT IS SEEN AS AN IMPORTANT CHANGE IN INTER-AMERICAN TRADITION. THE VOLUNTARY RELINQUISHMENT OF POWER BY A DE FACTO GOVERNMENT IN A POLITICAL PROCESS WHICH INCLUDES PARTICIPATION BY ALL MAJOR IDEOLOGICAL GROUPS IS SEEN AS A SIGNIFICANT EXPERIMENT, HE SAID, AND IS THUS BEING WATCHED CLOSELY BY ALL COUNTRIES.

7. COMMENT: THE INTERVIEW APPARENTLY TOOK PLACE ON THE RUN AS AYALA WAS LEAVING A CABINET MEETING ON JUNE 27. NONETHELESS, HIS BRUSQUE ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS WHICH MANY OTHER FOREIGN MINISTERS WOULD HAVE SEIZED UPON TO EXPOUND AT LENGTH, IS VERY CHARACTERISTIC OF HIS PUBLIC DEMEANOR. THE EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS FROM CON-

VERSATIONS WITH BOTH AYALA AND DIRECTOR GENERAL OF
POLITICAL AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY, HERNAN VEINTIMILLA,
THAT THEY AND THE MINISTRY IN GENERAL ARE "ECSTATIC"
OVER THE SUCCESS OF THE MINISTER'S TRIP TO WASHINGTON.
THEY NOTE BOTH THE BILATERAL WITH SECRETARY VANCE AND
ECUADOR'S SELECTION TO HEAD THE JURIDICAL-POLITICAL
COMMITTEE AS HIGHLIGHTS OF THE TRIP.
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